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## Forgotten funds net Air Force \$2M plus

*by Fran Crum, Information Directorate*

ROME, N.Y. — A procurement analyst at the Air Force Research Laboratory's Information Directorate, uncovered hidden funds that have already netted the Air Force more than \$2 million and are expected to save more than \$10 million over a five-year period.

Susan Hluska's submission to the Air Force Innovative Development through Employee Awareness (IDEA) program earned her a \$10,000 award.

The submission focused on accounts under the Government Purchase Card (GPC) program — credit cards used for purchases under \$2,500 in support of the directorate's research and development projects. Many of these accounts were stopped at the end of a fiscal year because of lack of funding, and a new GPC account opened with subsequent fiscal year funding. After the account was terminated, vendor refunds, bank rebates, and other credits were posted to the inactive accounts.

"It was purely by accident that I spotted it buried in a report generated by US Bank," said Hluska, of funds being held by US Bank in hundreds of inactive accounts. "The bank was reporting quarterly credits to Air Force GPC Agency Program Coordinators for credits applied to active accounts; however, it was not automatically refunding these credit balances on inactive accounts. Some of the credits had been there for years."

"Information that money was sitting there was well documented, but it was not information the bank gave out freely," said Hluska, a 23-year federal employee who joined the laboratory staff with the realignment of Griffiss Air Force Base in 1995. "If the credit balance came at the end of a fiscal year, it was never rebated and the funds sat inactive."

Implementation of Hluska's suggestion recouped at least \$20,000 during fiscal year 2003 for the AFRL GPC Program, and more than \$2 million Air Force-wide. The Air Force has about 48,000 GPC accounts. Based on historical GPC data, Air Force officials estimate they will recover at least \$10 million in credit balances on GPCs Air Force-wide over the next 5 years.

The federal government may recover additional money, since GPC is used throughout the Department of Defense. @